



Tips for Avoiding Migraine Triggers

You can take control of your headache pain by learning the triggers that lead to your migraines. Red wine, caffeine withdrawal, stress, or skipped meals are among the common culprits. The first step is to track your migraines in a diary. Make notes of what you were doing before and when your headache came on. What were you eating? How much sleep did you get the night before? Did anything stressful or important happen that day?

Learning Your Triggers

When you look at your diary, you might find that these things are leading to your migraine:

- Stress
- Menstrual periods
- Changes in your normal sleep pattern
- Extreme fatigue
- Certain foods and beverages
- Too much caffeine or withdrawal
- Skipping meals or fasting
- Changes in the weather
- Exercise
- Smoking
- Bright, flickering lights
- Odors

Foods Additives and Chemicals That Can Trigger Migraines

- Tyramine, a substance found naturally in aged cheeses, red wine, alcohol, and some processed meats
- Food additives/preservatives such as nitrates and nitrites found in hot dogs, ham, sausage, and other processed or cured meats
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)

Other Common Food and Drink Triggers

- Aged cheeses: blue cheese, mozzarella, feta, cheddar, parmesan
- Alcohol: red wine, beer, whiskey, champagne
- Caffeine: coffee, chocolate, tea, colas, sodas
- Pepperoni, hot dogs, luncheon meats
- Bread and other baked goods
- Dried fruits
- Smoked or dried fish
- Potato chips
- Pizza, peanuts, and chicken livers

Steps to Avoid Your Triggers

Watch what you eat and drink. If you get a headache, write down the foods and drinks you had beforehand. If you see a pattern over time, stay away from that item!

Eat regularly. Don't skip meals.

Curb the caffeine. Too much, in any food or drink, can cause migraines. But be careful: Cutting back suddenly may also cause them. Try slowly tapering off caffeine.

Be careful with exercise. Although doctors suggest regular physical activity to stay healthy, it can also trigger headaches. You may need to take an anti-inflammatory drug to prevent migraines brought on by exercise.

Get regular shut-eye. Changes in your normal sleep habits or being overly tired can be triggers.

Learn to manage stress. Try counseling, biofeedback, and relaxation training.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/migraines-headaches/all-about-headaches-15/migraine/avoid-migraine-triggers>

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